DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 229 492 UD 022 778

AUTHOR Diaz Soto, Lourdes
TITLE The Puerto Rican Family: Tradition and the Emergence of Change.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 20p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Acculturation; Cultural Background; *Cultural Traits; *Ethnic Stereotypes; *Family (Sociological Unit); *Family Characteristics; Literature Reviews; Puerto Rican Culture; *Puerto Ricans; Research Needs; Social Change; Social Support Groups

ABSTRACT

The traditional cultural values and changing attitudes of Puerto Rican families are examined in this literature review. Puerto Rican families are "enmeshed" in their relationships due to the pervasive influence of the extended family system, it is argued. In a review of migration patterns, first from Europe to Puerto Rico, and subsequently to the mainland United States, it is observed that acculturation takes place by the third generation, resulting in selective acquisition of traits. Changing attitudes of the younger generation in terms of specific family roles are discussed. Research findings from the island as well as the mainland are analyzed and assessed for their impact on negative stereotypes regarding the Puerto Rican family. The paper suggests a number of topics which researchers can study to help better understand the Puerto Rican family: (1) evaluation of the dynamics of acculturation and cultural change from a Puerto Rican man's perspective; (2) multicultural analysis of Hispanic families; (3) the socialization of Puerto Rican children and their families on the mainland; and (4) multicultural ecological perspective of the Puerto Rican family in terms of interaction with environment. (AOS)

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The Puerto Rican Family:

Tradition and the Emergence of Change

Lourdes Diaz Soto

The Pennsylvania State University

UD 022 778

Abstract

Traditional values and changing attitudes of the Puerto Rican family are examined, including the traditional typology and the influence of the Taino culture. A continuum of family patterns is described and a grid proposed to describe three generations of cultural adjustment. The emergence of change is viewed in terms of specific family roles. Research findings from both the mainland and the island are examined, which might dispel some myths. Implications are cited for educators. The areas and needs for future research are discussed.

Studies in Puerto Rico have indicated considerable variation in family values and role behaviors between families of differing social backgrounds as noted by Canino, et al. (1980). Emilicia Mizio (1974) states that there is no universal model of the Puerto Rican family in the United States. The family is affected by strains in different ways and should be thought of as a continuum. Some families on the mainland may remain even more traditional than the island family due to isolation.

Minuchin (1974) describes family patterns as falling in a continuum between "disengaged" and "enmeshed." The "disengaged" family would be characterized by autonomy and independence whereas the "enmeshed" is characterized by dependence and discouragement of self differentiation. Canino & Canino (1980) hypothesize that the Puerto Rican family falls in the "enmeshed" end of the spectrum due to frequent and prolonged mother-child interaction, extended time the young adult remains at home, discouragement of autonomous and independent behavior in adolescent girls, overlapping of extended family system, perception of illness as a family rather than an individual problem.

"These cultural patterns of transaction have often been misrepreserted as dysfunctional enmeshed patterns by culturally insensitive therapists" (Canino & Canino, 1980, p. 537).

The three kinds of adjustment which Fitzpatrick (1976) proposes have been a part of three generations of this author's experience. Withdrawal into the old culture was exemplified by "abuelita" who immigrated from the Canary Islands to Puerto Rico and later to the

mainland. Disassociation from the past by the second generation and "abuelita's" daughter. The culture bridge is exemplified by the author, a third generation circulatory migrant.

Canino & Canino (1980) propose that the first generation of migrants are experiencing "culture shock" and become entrenched in the old ethnic mores. The second generation rejects their parents' values and rupture the bonds with the original culture. The third generation experiences acculturation, is interested in ancestral heritage and is involved in the selective acquisition of traits.

Figure 1

First Generation (immigrant)	Second Generation (migrant)	Third Generation (circulatory migrant)
Withdrawal into old culture: low acculturation	Rejection of original culture: static state	Selective acquisition of traits: high acculturation

Bird and Canino (1982) note the change in family structure and family roles which may result in role conflicts and stress, especially for the Puerto Rican woman who is traditionally responsible for the preservation of the family and its mores.

The changing attitudes of the younger generation is exemplified by the data cited by Cooney, Rogler, and Shroder (1981). The younger generation is less likely: to have strong preference that their children keep Puerto Rican ways, to marry a Puerto Rican, or to plan to return to Puerto Rico in retirement. The equilization of social and

economic characteristics at the middle class level is greater for the younger generation. Eighty-seven percent of the younger generation has completed high school as compared to only 20 percent of the older generation.

The Traditional Family Typology

The following quote is a most complete description of the traditional family typology:

> The family is the dominant institution in Puerto Rican island culture, and strict differentiation of sex roles is strongly characteristic of the Puerto Rican family. The Puerto Rican male traditionally occupies a position of strong authority, governed by the norms of hombre de respeto and machismo. The Puerto Rican woman, on the other hand, is expected to be self sacrificing, restricted to home, chaste, dependent, and respectful of the male. Almost universally, the woman is seen as inferior to the male; Puerto Rican society is typically constructed to justify this belief, which can be attributed to the influences of the Catholic church and a Spanish legacy. The traditional family structure and rigid sex roles are generally prevalent throughout Puerto Rican island culture regardless of class and do not seem to be altered significantly by higher levels of education. (Torres-Matrullo, 1976, p. 710)

Fitzpatrick (1976) identifies a fourfold typology among Puerto Rican families which are also evident on the mainland: (1) the extended family--a source of strength, support and was traditionally the most common pattern; (2) the nuclear family--rapidly increasing with the advent of migration and upward mobility; (3) father, mother, their children and children of another union or unions of husband and wife; (4) the mother-based family with children of one or more men, but with no permanent male consort in the home.

Mizio (1974) describes the extended family in a nuclear family society as characterized by intimate relationships as a source of

pride and security, mutual obligations and strict controls, the elderly are respected and the young are dearly loved, the family includes more than relations by blood and marriage (this author recalls discovering beloved aunts that were not blood relatives in the early teens).

According to Steiner (1974), the island was originally matriarchal in nature, where the Taino women were the rulers, who fought side by side against the Spanish, were not likely to do menial tasks, yet did not use their power to oppress the males.

The Spanish patriarchal society is often cited as the most influential, yet the Taino culture may have had a greater impact than previously believed.

"Personalism," mutual help, and "hijos de crianza" are three family values which speak about the Puerto Rican society. "Personalism" as cited by Fitzpatrick (1976), is a part of the family values whereby the inner importance of the person is highly regarded. Rogler (1978) found mutual help which is incorporated by the nuclear family and continued into the extended family will also criss-cross blood and affinal relationships. "Hijos de crianza" is defined by Mizio (1974) as the cultural practice of assuming responsibility for a child's necessity of blood or friendship ties.

According to Rosario (1982), the societal roles have been well defined historically with the male being the wage earner and the female raising the children and attending to the housework. The traditional modality involves sex-based division of labor in performance of family related tasks (Rogler, 1978).

The traditional sex-role behaviors are summarized by Comas-Diaz (1982) as being clearly demarcated. These behaviors include: (1) machismo; (2) virginity cult--which expects chastity prior to marriage; (3) marianismo--which considers women morally and spiritually superior to men.

The society's perception of sex roles and its cultural expectation have an impact on the rearing of the next generation as noted by Christiansen (1979). Christiansen suggests that the qualities of the Puerto Rican woman (persevering, achieving, ambitious, adaptable, determined, etc.) can be traced to the child-rearing patterns. These patterns include for the female: (1) early restriction in dress, conduct, freedom, etc.; (2) a narrow role which simplifies the female task of growing up; (3) permitted little aggressive behavior so that energies are channeled into socially acceptable achievement. For the male the patterns include: (1) more freedom and license; (2) the machismo tradition. It is Christiansen's point of view that since the male has an easier earlier life he is ill-prepared for the later obligations in his life.

Canino & Canino (1980) view the traditional Puerto Rican family as having an authoritarian father and a submissive self-sacrificing mother who plays an affectional role. The children submit to the will and dictates of the father with strict obedience. Bird & Canino (1982) add the over-protection of children, ingrained religious and para religious beliefs, a double standard relative to expression of overt aggression while yielding to passive-aggressive as a cultural trait, proclivity toward non-verbal communicative styles, and the

important role played by members of the extended family as forming a part of the salient cultural norms.

As part of the Taino culture and the history of slavery, the "hembrista" concept carries two connotations, according to Comas-Diaz (1982): (1) it can pressure the woman to fulfill all cultural expectations as reflected by the woman who tries to be a dedicated wife, self-sacrificing mother, obedient daughter, full-time worker, etc.; (2) it can be the moving force behind the psychological stamina of the Puerto Rican woman.

The Puerto Rican family is extremely "child centered" and the traditional woman's role of care and concern for children is accentuated as noted by Canino, et al. (1980). The Mother's Day celebration in Puerto Rico is indicative of the greater concern for children and how this is reciprocated as cited by Christiansen (1979). When the Puerto Rican woman faces conflict in loyalties, she often opts for her role as a mother above her other roles (Comas-Diaz, 1982). The observations of clinical settings of Puerto Rican women have noted over-protection toward their children and exaggerated fear that harm will come to them, according to Torres-Matrullo (1976).

In certain life situations the traditional norms begin to be questioned (Bonilla, 1958), for example the unemployed male, the New York City changing patterns of family life.

It is not uncommon to give up personal gains or privacy for the family's sake (Murillo-Rohde, 1976). The concept of "familism" puts the family before the community.

The Emergence of Change

Zambrana (1982) notes the changing sex roles within the Hispanic family as a result of increased educational opportunity, increased labor force participation, and lower fertility. These changing roles mean added responsibility which may lead to stress and cultural conflicts for the Hispanic woman who tends to be younger, less educated, and more frequently heads a family than for other women. Lash et al. (1979) as cited by Zambrana states that of the Puerto Rican families in New York City, 50 percent are single-parent families.

The changes in the traditional roles have been most striking among the "Nuyorican" who as second generation Puerto Ricans, have incorporated the values and lifestyle of the dominant culture while retaining the important ideals of the native culture. The Puerto Rican family now living in the United States does not have such well-defined roles (Rosario, 1982).

Fitzpatrick (1976) notes that there is abundant evidence, that as a result of immigration, there is a shift of roles of husband and wife. It is easier for the women to obtain jobs and become economically independent. There is an impact from the American culture whereby the women become involved in social, community, and political activities. The wife is able to adapt to the patterns of the mainland.

Although Oscar Lewis (1966) portrayed a family in the "Culture of Poverty" and not a typical Puerto Rican family, he noted that in the Rios family the failure to accept traditional submissive roles

by the women, created tensions and problems in the marital relations. Lewis states that ambivalence with roles was indicative of a general trend toward greater freedom and independence for women as a result of increased urbanization, industrialization, and the Americanization of Puerto Rico.

Rogler & Hollingshead (1965) as cited by Rogler (1978), notes how sex role differences mediate the impact of schizophrenia. The wives coping efforts maintain a balance in complementarity of role relations in the family.

While the family is the major support network for all children, according to Rogler et al. (1980), it is especially true in the Puerto Rican case where the family is a fundamental integrating and identifying institution. The potent effects of family dysfunction may be more severe for the Puerto Rican child than for other children. The shift in roles of the Puerto Rican child is cited by Fitzpatrick (1976). The shift is from submission to independence.

According to Diaz-Soto (1983), the experience of the migrant child will parallel those of other children with an added dimension of cultural adjustment. The family structure and attitudes which the family maintains will have positive or negative effects on the adjustment process.

Research Findings

Many studies have documented the family's essential role in the institutional character of the Puerto Rican society, according to Rogler (1978). Yet there is little known as there are few field

studies based on systematic procedures with clearly articulated concepts and culturally-sensitive hypothesis. Rogler states that the problem is not how to fill in the gaps but rather on how to begin. Rogler cites examples of unanswered questions as changes from one generation to another with respect to mutual help, traditional modalities of sex-role segregation, and cultural values imported from the island home.

The more recent research has questioned the traditional roles, according to Canino (1982), due to the seeking and attaining of more egalitarian and autonomous roles.

A study conducted by Rosario (1982), with 45 Puerto Rican women in New York City indicated that women born in the United States had more liberal attitudes as did middle aged (26-45) and women with at least some college. Housewives and seamstresses had the most traditional attitudes. The author contends that the liberal attitudes may well be a measure of acculturation. Sylvia Pena Press (1982), views women in the United States in the process of redefining their own identities.

Adolescents and sex role expectations are changing in three areas, according to Canino (1982). The attitude changes are toward (1) child rearing, (2) virginity, (3) work outside the home. These findings include: (1) that as a result of more functional families there are more similar and moderate parental views; (2) one half of the adolescent females agreed that men should also be virgins for sexual equality. (These females also preferred a Puerto Rican mainlander as a mate.); (3) the need to establish a career was seen as a

safeguard from abandonment or to avoid domestic enslavement. This study found that the constructs of "macho" and "hembra," that have been widely used in describing Latin sex roles, fail to clearly and fully portray the interpersonal realities of the families studied. A discrepancy was noted between what the family thought the sex roles "should be" and what their actual interpersonal relationships were. The less adaptive family has the more exaggerated roles and is seen as ultimately ineffectual.

Burgos (1982) notes that with the advent of working mothers has come equality in the decision-making patterns. Burgos states that there is contradiction of the traditional male dominance when the female is the economic provider. The women in the middle strata solve conflicts with manipulative strategies in an effort to maintain the traditional image; whereas the working class female resorts to more direct approaches in an effort to gain a significant role in family matters.

Sanchez-Hidalgo (1962) as quoted by Comas-Diaz (1982), conducted an investigation with college-educated island women and found that they felt inferior to men in terms of cultural barriers. This study concluded that there was an inferiority complex evident among these women.

The study conducted by Fernandex Marina, et al. (1969) indicated that the fathers were not the undisputed masters or bosses nor were the mothers passive and retiring. Each parent expressed his or her personality rather than a predetermined social role. Rogler et al. (1980) states that in many families the "myth" of the strong male

authority figure contrasts sharply with the reality of the sub-culture where the female is the source of income.

Fernandez Marina, et al. (1969) demonstrated that Puerto Rico does not represent a "cultural hybridism," instead it is diversified internally as verbalized by the adolescents in this study.

A study conducted on 81 divorced Puerto Rican women by Vazquez (1979) found that although no overall significance between divorced and married women existed, there coexists among groups of women, widely differing and contradictory views about wife roles. The factors identified were: married women achieved more power in their marriages, participated in decision making and had more flexible division of tasks with the men.

Rodriguez, et al. (1978) as cited by Bird & Canino (1982), conducted a study to view the patterns of child-rearing practices in Puerto Rico. Some of the data corroborated certain beliefs while other data dispelled some myths. The average family size was found to be 5.4 with an average of 3.2 children. Eighty-five percent of these families, in Puerto Rico, were intact; while 14 percent were single mothers. A member of the extended family (usually a grandmother) was present in 21 percent of the households.

The indications of a sexual dichotomy were somewhat mitigated in the Rodriguez, et al. (1978) study since two thirds of the fathers helped with child care during the first six months. Only one third of the families studied had traditional demarcation of sex roles. Over 50 percent of the husbands participated in household chores with the higher socio-economic class exhibiting the highest participation.

Torres-Matrullo (1976) states that the Puerto Rican women are joining the mainstream and becoming more independent which indicates changes in self concept and self evaluation. In this study conducted with 72 Puerto Rican women in New Jersey, the women with low acculturation exhibited: high scales of depression, withdrawal, compulsive-obsession, problems of self acceptance, dependent, submissive, lacking in initiative, which might be indicative of poor self image and negative personality adjustment. The women with high acculturation were more assertive, persistent, conscientious, stable, competitive, perceptive, alert, resourceful, self sufficient, optimistic, poised, energetic, spontaneous and with an overall healthy personality development.

The hypothesis that family and sex role related attitudes undergo change with acculturation was not entirely supported according to the Torres-Matrullo (1976) study, since it found attitudes which had remained basically the same for the high acculturation subjects. Education was found to be an important variable influencing differences in personality adjustment, psychopath, and attitude change.

The latter finding in the above cited study would have strong implications for educators. As stated by Torres-Matrullo (1976), education may be seen as functioning to enrich and fortify the ego. The high acculturated subjects showed more positive personality adjustment yet the evidence indicated a respect for and adherence to traditional family related values.

Implications for Future Research

The next area of investigation needs to focus on the dynamics of acculturation and cultural change from the point of view of the Puerto Rican man, according to Torres-Matrullo (1976). The author cites a study by LeBlanc (1958), whereas the females in the Kantangenese population were undergoing attitude and socio-cultural change with acculturation; the men remained more attached to traditional cultural values regardless of acculturation. Is the Puerto Rican man experiencing changing family and sex role attitudes in acculturation?

A multi-cultural research perspective is suggested by Andrade (1982) for the analysis of Hispanic families. The social and economic pressures need to be examined on both male and female roles. Canino (1982), proposes that the research needed should include studies which focus on the family and sex roles and values as well.

Canino, et al. (1980) recommend a series of studies which would focus upon the socialization of Puerto Rican children on the mainland to identify how family, peer groups, school, and other institutions shape their character orientation. Andrade (1982) cites the need for a more realistic and comprehensive portrayal of family organization since to date there are stereotypic assumptions evident. Andrade suggests that theories of family organization and change must incorporate a multi-cultural, ecological perspective of the family in terms of interaction with the environment.

The need for further research to confirm clinical impressions and to clarify constant modifications of the cultural mores is noted

by Canino & Canino (1980). Why do some families adapt while others become dysfunctional?

What has been written on the Puerto Rican family in the past 30-40 years has been mostly impressionistic and although valuable, it has been limited in scope (Bird & Canino, 1983). The Puerto Rican society has undergone dramatic changes.

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